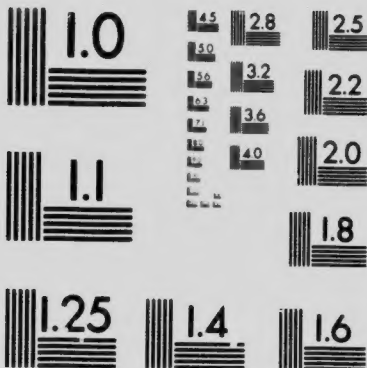




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*Dominion Alliance for the Total Suppression
of the Liquor Traffic. Manitoba Branch*

Dominion Alliance Manifesto



**Also Citizens' Reasons
for Ignoring the
So-Called Referendum**

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Dominion Alliance Manifesto

NO REFERENDUM!

The Act, the Whole Act, and Nothing But the Act

To the ~~members~~ of the Manitoba
Branch of the Dominion Alliance.

You are aware that the Manitoba branch of the Dominion Alliance during its late convention in Winnipeg, (at which were present over 500 delegates, representing all parts of the province and all political parties) approached the government and pleaded that without any further reference to the people the prohibitory liquor law on our statute book be proclaimed in force. The Ministerial Association of this city, without a dissenting voice also, and at the same time, urged this course upon the government as the only consistent one in view of the action already taken by the government and of its pledges to the people. To the convention the premier replied on behalf of the government in the following note:

Rev. E. J. Chegwin, Secretary Manitoba
Branch Dominion Alliance, City:

Winnipeg, Jan. 15, 1902.

Rev. and Dear Sir,—I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of yours of even date, asking an answer to the requests that were made to the government and legislature to-day, jointly, by the representatives of your body and those of the Ministerial association of the city. In reply beg to say that after carefully considering the statements made to-day by members of the Ministerial association and the Dominion Alliance, the government, after consulting with their supporters in caucus, still believe it is desirable that a referendum should be held, such referendum deciding the

fate of the Act, the government pledging to the strict enforcement of the Act, if so brought into force by the referendum. I have the honor to be your obedient servant.

(Sgd.) R. P. ROBLIN.

The Alliance, after some consideration of this reply, appointed a committee to prepare a suitable finding, which reads as follows:

"Moved by Rev. Joseph Hogg, seconded by J. J. Ring, Esq. Whereas "the convention has expressed itself "already by unanimous resolution "against the so-called referendum in "the case of the Liquor Act, and "Whereas such a referendum has been "finally decided upon by the government, therefore resolved we recommend:

"That the temperance people of "this province ignore this referendum "and abstain from polling their votes "thereon. And that the executive "committee be instructed to prepare "for distribution a fuller statement "of the principles and considerations "which have guided us to this conclusion."

In all that great convention not more than six could be counted as voting against the above resolution and upon further motion this became the unanimous finding of the meeting.

According to the instructions of the Alliance we now give you the considerations which induced them to adopt the resolution to ignore the so-called referendum.

The prohibitory liquor law now on our statute book is a government

measure. It was enacted as the ratification of a pledge made by the party to the electorate, which party is now represented by the government of the province. Responsibility for the promise was admitted and the obligation to fulfill it was recognized on the floor of the House when the bill that is now the law was under discussion. Why then should the government that unhesitatingly assumed the responsibility of enacting such a law and of having its validity tested in the Supreme Court of the Empire now refuse to take the responsibility of enforcing it.

Neither the Alliance nor its executive is called upon to consider whether "the referendum" would be a wise or unwise measure to be made available for general application in the practical politics of the country. We need only say that, as yet, it is not a part of our constitutional system, and that the principle of it, were it in operation, applies only to proposed legislation. An instance has never been known in which it was applied to an Act that had already become law and been signed as such by the representative of the Sovereign or other chief authority.

Further we do not believe that the lieutenant-governor who stands between the crown and the people, to protect both, and to prevent hasty measures being passed to the detriment of the privileges of either the people or the crown, will ever take away the rights of the people of this province to responsible government, and we are confident he will hesitate long before he will sign an act embodying a referendum such as that referred to in the premier's letter, which would so manifestly be subversive of the main principle of the British constitution, namely, responsible government.

To show the needlessness of the proposed so-called referendum we would further remind you, as you well know that two plebiscites were held and in each a majority in favor of prohibition was given and that in one case it was so large that the legislature styled it "an overwhelming majority;" also that the Liquor Act was agreed to by a unanimous vote of the whole house and has been declared by H. M. Privy Council to be a valid Act.

The Honorable Hugh John Macdonald honestly redeemed his pledges and placed upon the statute book our Act. The present government, his successors, now propose this so-called referendum and they offer it to us in the guise of a gift in order that the people "may be educated" once more to record the third or fourth time an

"overwhelming majority." If the government had any doubt about their obligation to enforce the law, why did they not take steps to remove the doubt before testing its validity in the courts?

Who asked for this referendum? The prohibitionists did not. Did the liquor party? If so, then the government admits that although they advised the crown that the Liquor Act was unanimously assented to by the legislature, they are prepared to accept the dictation of the liquor party and try to undo their own act. If the government suggested the referendum, then they, of their own motion, are trying to evade the responsibilities of enforcing an act, passed and placed upon the statute book by their own party. No friend of ours could possibly have suggested such a course and we leave it to the common sense of the people to judge as to how it came to be suggested.

The Worst Tactics.

To accept the so-called referendum would be the worst possible tactics. No matter in what arms the Referendum Act may be framed the government, having laid the responsibility of enforcement upon the people will stand aloof with perfect indifference to the fate of the Liquor Act. The prohibitionists alone must assume the whole care of its fate. The government will say in effect, "We now wash our hands of this Act of yours. Bring out your voters. Appoint your scrutineers, set your machinery agoing. Of course you can't depend upon our organization to help you. If you fail to get a sufficient majority, the loss will be yours, not ours."

Again, through this so-called referendum, the Liquor Act will be removed from the sphere of party politics and will no longer have behind it the full weight of a political party. Neither responsibility for the enforcement of the Act nor discredit for failure to enforce, can be laid upon either of the two great political parties.

Further, even supposing the vote at the proposed referendum should be overwhelmingly in favor of the Act what guarantee have we that a government which have manifestly regarded this Act with disfavor from the first will devote themselves to its enforcement with the vigor and conscientiousness necessary to its success? In addition to this we ought to remember that under our present political system we can secure prohibition only through one of the parties. The Conservative party is now pledged to support us. If the govern-

ment can persuade us to accept the proposed referendum they will have cast prohibition out of their party platform with our consent, and when the next crisis arises they will say "we will give you another referendum." The government is in dire straits if they can ask us to take such a position, and they must think we can be most easily deceived. We will be throwing away the advantage for which we have for years been fighting, and we will have it said of us that we were willing to become a football to be kicked about at a referendum whenever we are getting troublesome. How can we accept this position? How can we commit political suicide? How could we ever ask either party to help us in the days to come?

The government would be released from all their pledges if we were to accept the so-called referendum for they would undoubtedly claim that it had been accepted by us as a fulfillment of these pledges. It would put us where we were before the Act was passed.

Would Be a Surrender.

And lastly, in regard to this question of tactics. If the prohibitionists accept the proposed referendum of the government and assist in carrying it through they would surrender a vantage ground toward which they have painfully, foot by foot, fought their way. Now they can dictate terms to political parties. After accepting the referendum they would have to go begging on their knees for such scraps of legislation as their lordly masters might deign to cast to them.

Can you suppose that a vote on a referendum taken under such circumstances could be a mandate from the people? Could any government declare after the plebiscites that have been had, and after the Alliance asking the people to refrain from voting because it was trifling with our cause, that under such circumstances any such vote was a vote of the people? In the former plebiscites the silent vote has been claimed as against our cause. If you take the stand recommended by the Alliance we, on the same principle, shall be entitled to claim all the unpollled vote as being in our favor. Would any government dare to repeal the Liquor Act under such circumstances? Should they do so there will be such a revulsion of feeling that it will be almost a revolution; and every honest man desiring an honest

government would arise to hurl such a government from power. The Liquor Act is the law of the land. Why should we be asked to be a party to its destruction?

We would appeal to you to remember our wonderful convention, composed of between 500 and 600 delegates, over half of them from all over the province, men of the highest character and ability, gathering at a moment's notice to deal with this most important question. We would again call your attention to the fact that every resolution passed was in effect unanimous, and that our action has summoned to our support many who in the days gone by always looked askance at our cause. We have won friends by the course taken at the Alliance convention, and every day's press is bringing them in larger numbers to our assistance. We have no fear. Our cause is over-ruled by a Higher Power, a wisdom, that is not our own. We appeal to you to stand by the Alliance in the resolution of its magnificent convention, and to work harmoniously together as a whole in abstaining and in persuading our friends also to abstain from the poll.

In conclusion, we feel that we cannot acquiesce in or condone the great moral wrong proposed to be perpetrated upon the temperance people of this province by accepting the so-called referendum, and we feel confident that by loyally supporting the course adopted by the Alliance, we shall not only preserve the Act, but we shall also hold fast that vantage ground for which we have fought so long and which we have won at such cost.

By order and on behalf of the Manitoba Branch of the Dominion Alliance.

W. REDFORD MULOCK, Prest.

(REV.) E. J. CHEGWIN, Sec'y.

Winnipeg, Feb. 3, 1902.

Addendum.

We desire to call the attention of our members to the position taken by the Ministerial association, as published in the press of the 17th January, 1902, and also to the reasons adduced in the Winnipeg papers of 3rd February, 1902, by a committee of independent, representative citizens, for the adoption of the same course as taken by the Alliance. W. R. M.

Reasons for Ignoring the So-Called Referendum

By Twenty-Two Leading and Representative Citizens, Irrespective of Politics

To our fellow citizens in the Province of Manitoba:

Gentlemen:—Our attention having been called to the following letter which recently appeared in the public press we venture to address you in reference thereto. The letter is as follows:

Rev. E. J. Chegwinn, City:

Winnipeg, Jan. 15, 1902.

Rev. and Dear Sir,—I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of yours of even date, asking an answer to the requests that were made to the government and legislature to-day, jointly, by the representatives of your body and those of the Ministerial association of the city. In reply beg to say that after carefully considering the statements made to-day by members of the Ministerial association and the Dominion Alliance, the government, after consulting with their supporters in caucus, still believe it is desirable that a referendum should be held, such referendum deciding the fate of the Act, the government pledging to the strict enforcement of the Act, so brought into force by the referendum. I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

(Sgd.) R. P. ROBLIN.

In view of the statements contained in the above letter, we the undersigned hereby enter our solemn protest against the proposed action of the Government as outlined in said letter and do hereby pledge ourselves should such action be taken, to abstain from voting either "yea" or "nay" in connection with the so-called referendum, and do hereby invite our fellow-citizens to adopt the same course for the following (amongst other) good and sufficient reasons:

1. We contend that the application of the proposed referendum is sub-

versive of the principles of representative and responsible government because,

(a) The Referendum introduces a new principle of legislation into our system of representative government, and is in itself so serious an innovation, as far as our provincial autonomy is concerned that (without pronouncing for or against the principle involved) it ought not in our opinion to be adopted, without the most careful consideration of which the present occasion does not admit. It is also upheld for inasmuch as a sufficient mandate on the subject in question has, in our opinion, been already given, but, if not so given, the constitution provides other well known modes of ascertaining the views of the electorate.

(b) No mandate for such a referendum has as yet been given by the people of this province.

(c) Even if correct in principle there is, as far as we are aware, no precedent, either under British or foreign systems of government, for its present proposed application to the enforcement of an act of the legislature, already assented to by the crown.

(d) Its proposed application would relieve the government of a responsibility which, under our representative system necessarily attaches to them in respect of all measures enacted during their administration, and more particularly in respect of a measure introduced by them and enacted, as in the present case, in fulfilment of a distinct pledge made to the electorate;

(e) Such application further involves an abdication (protanto) by the legislature of its legislative authority, inasmuch as it is proposed to make the Referendum decide the fate of the act which is to be brought into force or not, according to the result of the poll.

2 We hold the proposed action of the government to be morally indefensible because,

(a) A prohibitory law was a plank in the party platform of the government at the last general election;

(b) The Liquor act was framed, introduced and supported by ministers upon the floor of the house;

(c) The act was finally passed by the unanimous vote of the legislature;

(d) By the advice of the ministers the assent of the crown thereto was obtained;

(e) The government defended the act at a large cost before the courts, even to the extent of an appeal to H. M. Privy council;

(f) The postponement of the operation of the act beyond the 1st of June, 1901, was obtained on the understanding that the sole reason for such postponement was to secure a decision as to its validity and that on such validity being assured the act would be put into operation.

3. Though a comparatively minor matter we desire to point out further that a referendum would involve a considerable, and in our opinion unwarrantable expenditure of public moneys.

4. Lastly, we are of opinion that in failing to advise the proclamation of the act by his honor, the lieutenant-governor, at the earliest available opportunity, after the decision of the privy council became known to them, the ministry have acted in an arbitrary and despotic manner, inasmuch as they have by such failure practically suspended the operation of an act now on the statute book of the province. It is also to be noted that although the legislature, from whom they received their instructions, has now been some three weeks in session, they have so far refrained from consulting them. We therefore strongly condemn this action, or want of action, not only on the ground that its effect is to thwart the will of the people, but also because in our opinion it is injurious to the dignity and authority of the crown.

Accordingly from motives of loyalty to the crown and the constitution, and in the interests of good faith and good government, we earnestly protest against the action contemplated by the ministry; and fur-

ther believing as we do that in recognizing the referendum we would be making ourselves accomplices in the wrong-doing of the government, and would be assisting them in such wrong-doing, we have ourselves resolved to refrain from voting and do hereby earnestly and respectfully urge our fellow citizens to do likewise.

Winnipeg, Jan. 31, 1902.

(Signed)

R. P. BOWLES, pastor Grace church.

J. W. COCKBURN, alderman.

FREDERIC B. DUVAL, D. D., pastor Knox church.

J. W. L. SCOLL, manager McClary Manufacturing company.

ARTHUR M. FRASER, solicitor at law.

C. W. GORDON, minister, St. Stephen's church.

J. M. JOHNSTON, president Primary Teachers' Union and secretary Manitoba Sunday School association.

T. B. KILPATRICK, D. D., professor of theology, Manitoba college.

JOHN McNEIL, pastor First Baptist church.

W. PATRICK, D. D., principal of Manitoba college.

E. S. POPHAM, M. D., C. M.

ROBERT PHAIR, Archdeacon of Islington.

GEORGE L. PHILLIPS, chancellor Salvation Army.

THOS. D. ROBINSON, merchant.

J. J. ROY, rector St. George's church.

R. R. SCOTT, manager Macpherson Fruit company.

J. B. SILCOX, minister, Central Congregational church.

W. T. SCOTT, president Winnipeg Labor Party.

G. F. STEPHENS, merchant.

ANDREW STEWART, D. D., professor of theology, Wesley college.

W. C. VINCENT, president Baptist convention, Manitoba and N. W. T.

A. WICKSON, banker.

The occupation or profession of each of these gentlemen is given merely for purposes of identification.